of distance. In the presence of enterprising merchants, particularly the atar or itinerant traders who will be discussed below, a cultivator in some outlying village need not undertake the arduous journey across broken country to Rowanduz to retail his products and to purchase the materials required by his home. 443

The agricultural village can enjoy a certain amount of self-sufficiency insofar as its food supply is concerned, although the specialization in tobacco has transformed this to some extent, but there are a number of other requirements which only the merchant can satisfy, many of them "necessary luxuries" without which life is hardly bearable. For reasons which can only be speculated upon, the Kurdish villager is today far from being the master of his environment, and there are undoubtedly present a number of mineral, vegetable, and animal products which could be utilized to good advantage. He is no innovator and his knowledge of what we call woodcraft, the ingenious exploitation of the environment at a primitive level, is practically nothing. Once a young agha exhibited as a trophy an ibex skin, dried hard and stiff, which, if properly tanned, would have made an excellent rug or covering. An inquiry, and later investigation, revealed that only a few villagers knew the techniques of preparing skins; almost all of the leather which is locally produced and put into use is what is commonly called rawhide. The villager thus requires a great complex of things, of which only a few are cigarette papers, cloth, cooking utensils, iron or steel 433 [176] 281 432